



NAVY HISTORY MATTERS

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Welcome to Navy History Matters—our weekly compilation of articles, commentaries, and blogs related to history and heritage. Every week we'll gather the top-interest items from a variety of media and social media sources and then link you to related content at NHHC's website (history.navy.mil), your authoritative source for Navy history.

★ WWII@75: Japanese Formally Surrender

On Sept. 2, 1945, the instrument of formal surrender of Japan to the Allied powers was signed aboard battleship USS Missouri in Tokyo Harbor—officially ending World War II. On the heels of the successful Iwo Jima and Okinawa campaigns, the Allies had planned to invade the Japanese homeland, but the operation would have been extremely costly, and the American people were increasingly becoming “war weary” after years of continuous battles and the loss of so many American lives. After the formal surrender of the Empire of Japan, the U.S. Navy undertook extraordinary efforts to bring American Sailors, Marines, Soldiers, and Airmen home. Operation Magic Carpet was the post-World War II operation to repatriate over eight million American military personnel from the European, Pacific, and Asian theaters. After the war, the United States led the Allies in the occupation and reconstruction of the Japanese nation. From 1945–1952, U.S. forces, led by Gen. Douglas MacArthur, enacted widespread military, political, economic, and social reforms.



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nara-series/sc-series/SC-200000/SC-213700.html>

★ Guardians of the Past

For almost three decades, a group of Reserve Sailors attached to NHHC has traversed the globe to document fleet oral histories. Since 1991, Reserve fleet historians have staffed the Navy Combat Documentation Unit (NCDU) to provide routine and mobilization support in documenting combat and peacetime operations. “We make history relevant—understanding the past, informing the present, and guiding our decisions about the future,” said Capt. Bryon T. Smith, a former NCDU commanding officer. Naval history is collected and recorded by the Reservists, then filed at NHHC. Eventually, the information is housed at the National Archives. For more, read the U.S. Navy release. For more on the origins of NHHC, visit NHHC's website.



Photo Link: https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/display-news/Article/2324000/guardians-of-the-past/fbclid/IwAR3ekQXuriaHR0q8OAsCLFacoub03PsDS_l8vuXKJQbLCYE1aglkHUUWd7o/#images

★ First Prize Taken by a Continental Vessel

On Sept. 7, 1775, during the American Revolution, the British supply ship Unity was taken by the Continental schooner Hannah. It was the first “prize” taken by a Continental vessel. Hannah, originally owned by John Glover of Marblehead, MA, was the first armed vessel to sail under Continental pay and control. Hannah switched ownership on Aug. 24, 1775, when Gen. George Washington paid for the ship. Hannah was the beginning of the small fleet fitted out by Washington in the fall of 1775 to aid in the siege of Boston. Her first captain was Nicholson Broughton, a captain in the Army, and her crew was recruited from Glover's regiment. After capturing Unity, the ship returned to Beverly, MA, and sailed again near the end of September 1775. She cruised off Boston and was run ashore by British sloop Nautilus near Beverly on Oct. 10. After an energetic engagement between Nautilus and the townspeople on the shore, Hannah was saved from destruction and capture. Soon after the incident, Hannah was decommissioned when Washington found ships that were more suitable to the defense of the colonies.



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhhc-series/nh-series/NH-56000/NH-56405.html>

★ Historic Navy Submarine *Cod* Receives Grant for Restoration

The [National Park Service](#) awarded a \$395,050 grant to the Cleveland Coordinating Committee for the restoration of historic [World War II](#) submarine *USS Cod*, which now makes the [Ohio](#) city its home. “This grant ensures that *USS Cod* will remain accessible,” said U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown in a statement. “This investment will help fuel the local economy in the area, while preserving this historic vessel for generations to come.” *Cod* was commissioned on June 21, 1943, and received seven battle stars during the war. The [submarine](#) was credited with sinking 26,985 tons of Japanese shipping. Notably, on May 10, 1944, *Cod*’s crew daringly attacked a heavily escorted enemy convoy of 32 ships, sinking destroyer *Karukaya* and a cargo ship. For more, [read the article](#).



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhhc-series/nh-series/NH-79000/NH-79761.html>

★ A Special Delivery for the Doolittle Raiders

On April 2, 1942, *USS Hornet* left a San Francisco port on a highly secretive mission carrying 16 U.S. Army Air Force B-25 Mitchell bombers. The task force, consisting of Navy and Army Air Force assets, was part of a plan to strike back at Japan in vengeance for the Dec. 7, 1941, [attack on Pearl Harbor](#) that killed more than 2,300 Americans, crippled numerous ships of the U.S. fleet, and destroyed several others, including *USS Arizona*. The mission would come to be known as the [Doolittle Raid](#). Before the task force was far from American shores, *Hornet* received a special delivery that was critical to the mission. With room on the flight deck limited due to the size of the large bombers, the delivery came via [Navy blimp L-8](#). The blimp delivered 300 pounds of fragile navigator domes needed to finish the aircraft modifications. The bombers had already been stripped down to only the essentials to make the long, projected flight. For more, [read the article](#). For more on [airships & dirigibles](#), go to [NHHC’s website](#).



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhhc-series/nh-series/NH-53000/NH-53294.html>

★ First Navy Vessel Named *Idaho* in More Than a Century

The future fast attack nuclear [submarine](#) *USS Idaho* will be the first U.S. Navy vessel in more than 100 years to be named in honor of the “Gem State.” “Idaho has a [rich naval history](#) that spans the entire state from Camp [Farragut](#) in northern Idaho to the Naval Reactors Facility at the Idaho National Lab. In fact, much of the acoustic technology on the future *USS Idaho* was developed on Lake Pend Oreille at the Navy Research Facility in Bayview, ID,” former Idaho Gov. Dirk Kempthorne said in a press release. The [third Idaho](#) was a motor boat that patrolled the waters off Cape May and Philadelphia during [World War I](#). The [fourth Idaho](#) was a battleship that was commissioned in 1919 and received seven battle stars for her [World War II](#) service. For more on the future *Idaho*, [read the article](#).



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhhc/news-and-events/multimedia-gallery/infographics/state-infographics/idaho-s-naval-history.html>

★ Herman Carl Abelein Jr.: A Jack of All Trades

Herman Carl Abelein Jr. was like many veterans, a jack-of-all-trades. He originally enlisted as an airman apprentice in the Navy to avoid being drafted, which would have left him with no choice of specialty or even military branch. Little did he know that the enlistment would be the beginning of a long naval career. Beginning in San Diego, CA, his training took him to Corpus Christi, TX, and Pensacola, FL. When the [Korean War](#) broke out in June 1950, Abelein was commissioned, but before he was able to become a [naval aviator](#), he was sent to train at the Advanced Underseas Weapons (AUW) school. After he completed the course, he became the officer in charge of the AUW in Japan. Abelein flew 20 different types of aircraft over the course of his 28-year career. For more on Abelein, [read the blog](#) at Vantage Point.



Photo Link: https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Herman_Carl_Abelein_AVS.jpg

★ U.S. Navy Christened Littoral Combat Ship USS *Savannah*

On Aug. 29, the U.S. Navy christened its newest Independence-variant littoral combat ship, the future USS *Savannah*, during a ceremony at Mobile, AL. “Today, we christened the sixth USS *Savannah* following an outstanding record of service named for a great American city. In so doing, we move one step closer to welcoming a new ship to naval service and transitioning the platform from a mere hull number to a ship with a name and spirit,” said Secretary of the Navy [Kenneth J. Braithwaite](#). “There is no doubt future Sailors aboard this ship will carry on the same values of honor, courage, and commitment upheld by crews from earlier vessels that bore this name.” For more, [read the article](#). For more on [Georgia’s naval history](#), visit [NHHC’s website](#).



Photo Link: <https://www.navyrecognition.com/index.php/news/defence-news/2020/august/8911-us-navy-has-christened-littoral-combat-ship-uss-savannah-lcs-28.html>

★ Webpage of the Week

This week’s Webpage of the Week is a page that was recently updated in NHHC’s [DANFS](#) index. [USS Wasp](#) was commissioned on April 25, 1940, at the Army Quartermaster Base in South Boston, MA. When [World War II](#) broke out, *Wasp* was on “holiday routine” in Grassy Bay, which today is known as Jamaica Bay on the western tip of Long Island. *Wasp* was heavily involved in the [Battle of the Atlantic](#) until June 1942 when she set sail for the Pacific. On Aug. 7, 1942, during the [Solomons Campaign](#), the first planes from *Wasp*’s air group barreled down the deck for bombing missions that proved highly successful. The following day, *Wasp* joined [Enterprise](#) and [Saratoga](#) and by midnight, the landings on Guadalcanal had been deemed an Allied victory. On Sept. 15, *Wasp* and [North Carolina](#), with ten other warships, were escorting transports carrying Marines to Guadalcanal. That afternoon a lookout called out, “three torpedoes . . . three points forward of the starboard beam!” Two of the torpedoes hit *Wasp* directly, causing massive explosions. Although valiant efforts to save the ship were undertaken, the ship’s commander ordered “abandon ship” about an hour after the strikes. Twenty-five officers and 150 men were killed in the attack. Surrounding ships rescued surviving crewmembers.



Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhnc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nara-series/80-g/80-G-10000/80-G-16331.html>

★ Today in Naval History

On Sept. 1, 1925, Cmdr. John Rodgers and a crew of four in a PN-9 aircraft ran out of fuel on the first attempt of a nonstop flight from San Francisco to Hawaii. While ships searched for the plane, Rodgers led his crew in improvising sails from the plane’s wing material to continue the trip afloat. After nine days at sea, the aircraft managed to make it within 15 miles of Nawiliwili Bay, Kauai, when submarine [R-4](#) discovered Rodgers and his crew. The aircraft was then towed into port by the [submarine](#). Rodgers was killed in an airplane crash less than a year after the incident.



For more dates in naval history, including your selected span of dates, see [Year at a Glance](#) at [NHHC’s website](#). Be sure to check this page regularly, as content is updated frequently.

Photo Link: <https://www.history.navy.mil/content/history/nhnc/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhnc-series/nh-series/NH-81000/NH-81290.html>